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1 OF 4

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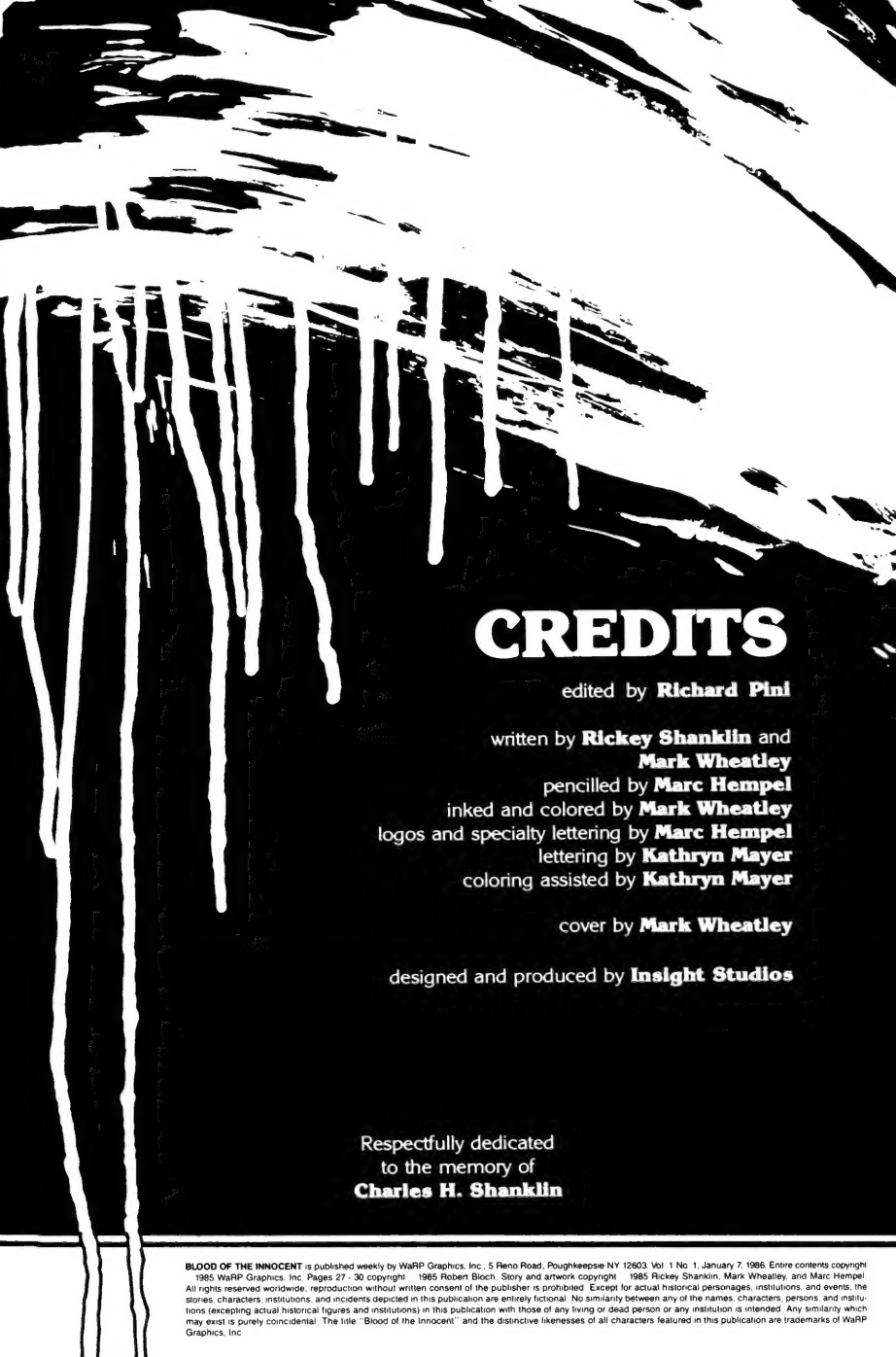
BLOOD OF THE INNOCENT



DRACULA
JACK
THE RIPPER

NIGHTMARE & FANTASY FOR
MATURE READERS

Special Feature by ROBERT BLOCH



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Respectfully dedicated
to the memory of
Charles H. Shanklin

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IF ONLY IT WERE TRUE...

CHAPTER
ONE:

MOON New New Blood

ONE YEAR EARLIER, 1888...

EVEN A SIMPLE DINNER PARTY IS A GRAND AFFAIR AT SANDRINGHAM. BUT SUCH A DISPLAY IS HARDLY NOTICED BY THE ROYALTY IN ATTENDANCE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR, DUKE OF CLARENCE-- KNOWN AS EDDY TO HIS FRIENDS.

FOR THAT MATTER--NOT EVEN HIS FRIEND, JAMES KENNETH STEPHEN, PAYS MUCH NOTICE TO THE OFFERED FEAST. BOTH YOUNG MEN HAVE OTHER THINGS ON THEIR MINDS.

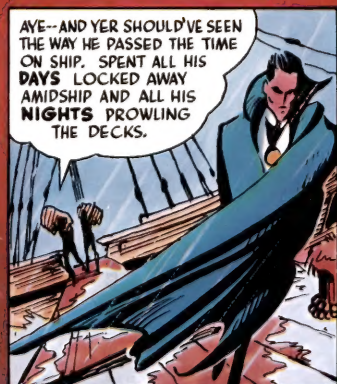
JAMES,
HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT
THAT **COUNT** WHO'S DUE
TO ARRIVE IN ENGLAND,
SHORTLY? QUITE INTERESTING,
ACTUALLY. I HEAR HE'S COME
TO SEEK OUT NEW BLOOD
FOR HIS HOMELAND.





IN A HARBOR ON THE ENGLISH COAST--
THE SUBJECT OF THAT CONVERSATION
DEFIES THE STORM, AND STRIDES EASILY
DOWN THE GANGPLANK...

LOOK AT 'IM!
BLOODY ARISTOCRAT!
MARCHIN' ONTO THE
QUEEN'S SOIL
LIKE IT WAS
'IS OWN!



AYE--AND YER SHOULD'VE SEEN
THE WAY HE PASSED THE TIME
ON SHIP. SPENT ALL HIS
DAYS LOCKED AWAY
AMIDSHIP AND ALL HIS
NIGHTS PROWLING
THE DECKS.



HE LOOKS QUEER,
EVEN FOR
ROYALTY.



ROYALTY! **HA!**
AYE, THAT'S WHAT'S
CLAIMED... SOME
COUNT OF A
BLOODY, BACKWARDS
SPOT.

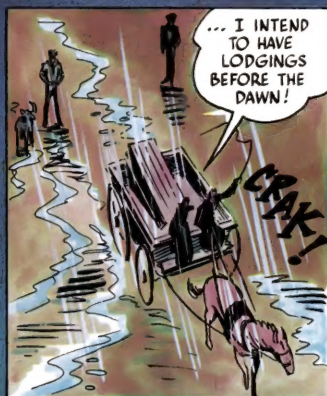
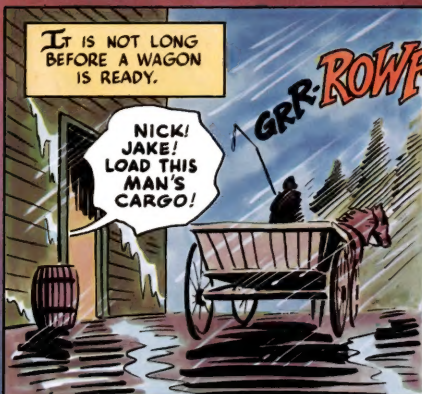


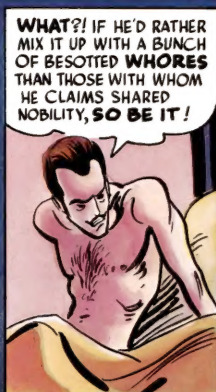
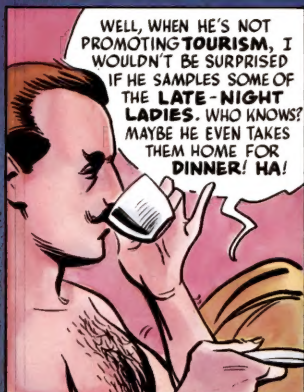
WHEN HE CAME ABOARD
HE LOOKED THE PART
OF A COUNT,
HE DID...

... BUT HE DON'T
LOOK SO HIGH
AND MIGHTY
NOW!

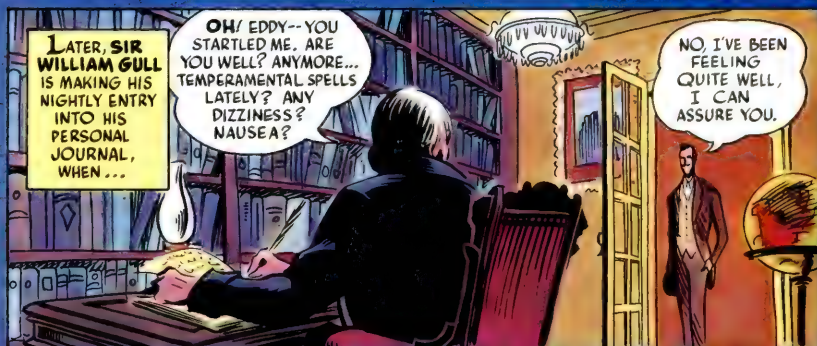












LATER, SIR WILLIAM GULL IS MAKING HIS NIGHTLY ENTRY INTO HIS PERSONAL JOURNAL, WHEN ...

OH! EDDY--YOU STARTLED ME. ARE YOU WELL? ANYMORE... TEMPERAMENTAL SPELLS LATELY? ANY DIZZINESS? NAUSEA?

NO, I'VE BEEN FEELING QUITE WELL, I CAN ASSURE YOU.

I KNOW YOU THINK ME QUITE ILL, BUT I'VE NEVER FELT BETTER! THIS SICKNESS IS NOT SO MUCH THAT I CANNOT OVERCOME IT!



DAMNATION, EDDY-- WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND? YOU AREN'T WELL AT ALL! IT'S SYPHILIS, AND THERE'S NO CURE!



SOON, PARESIS WILL SET IN, AND MADNESS WILL FOLLOW.

DEATH IS CERTAINLY MANY YEARS OFF, BUT IT IS AN INESCAPABLE FACET OF YOUR CONDITION. THERE IS LITTLE EVEN I CAN DO.



I'M... SORRY.



SIR WILLIAM, IT ISN'T YOUR FAULT. AND I DO UNDERSTAND. HONESTLY, I DO.



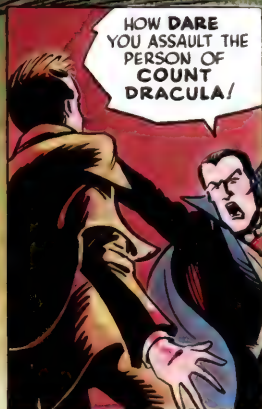
BUT I HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS THING IN MY OWN WAY... ON MY OWN TERMS.

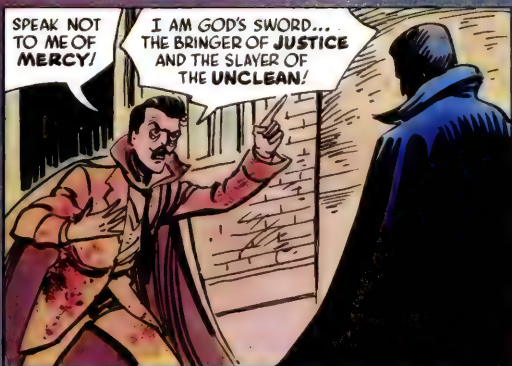
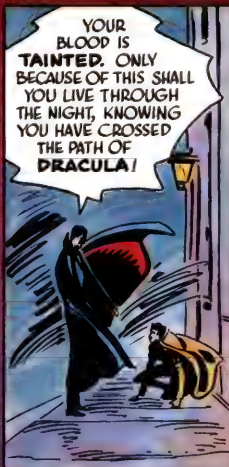
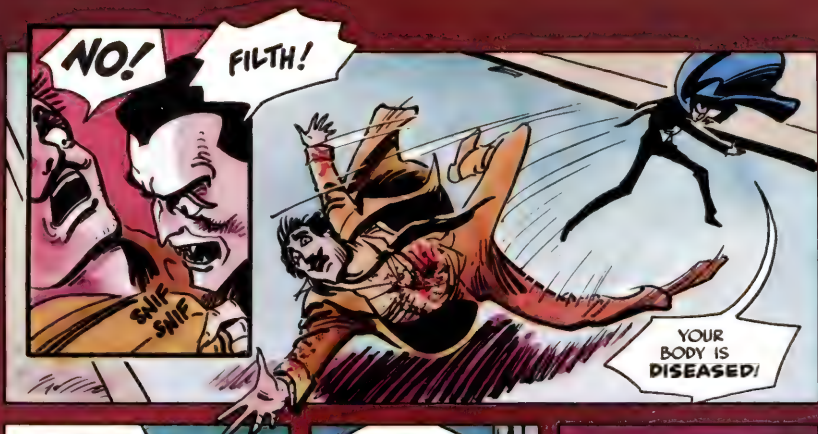


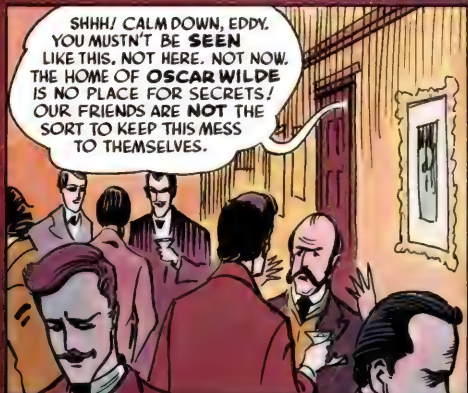


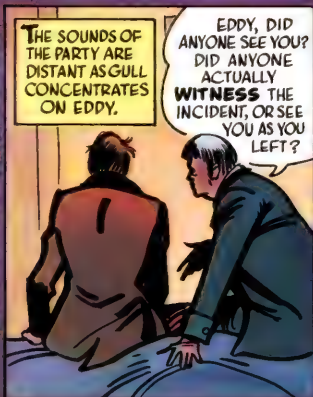


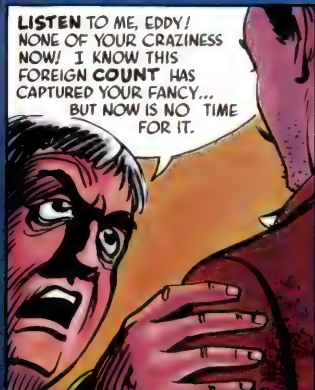
EDDY IS TERRIFIED--
HIS FEAR PAINTS A
MONSTROUS SIGHT.



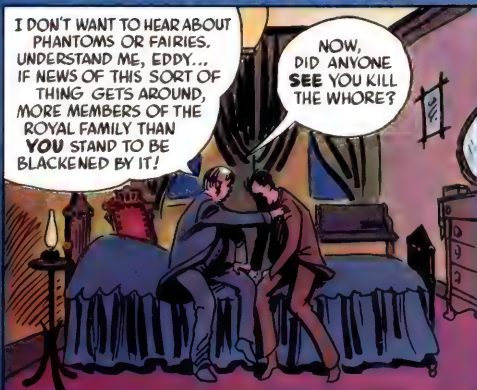






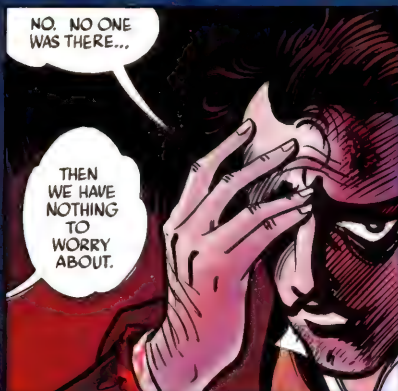


LISTEN TO ME, EDDY!
NONE OF YOUR CRAZINESS
NOW! I KNOW THIS
FOREIGN **COUNT** HAS
CAPTURED YOUR FANCY...
BUT NOW IS NO TIME
FOR IT.



I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT
PHANTOMS OR FAIRIES.
UNDERSTAND ME, EDDY...
IF NEWS OF THIS SORT OF
THING GETS AROUND,
MORE MEMBERS OF THE
ROYAL FAMILY THAN
YOU STAND TO BE
BLACKENED BY IT!

NOW,
DID ANYONE
SEE YOU KILL
THE WHORE?



NO. NO ONE
WAS THERE...

THEN
WE HAVE
NOTHING
TO WORRY
ABOUT.



NO ONE WOULD LINK THE HEIR
TO THE **THRONE OF ENGLAND**
WITH THE FATE OF A COMMON
WHORE.

THERE'LL
DOUBTLESS
BE A HURRIED
INVESTIGATION
INTO HER
MURDER AS
IT IS.

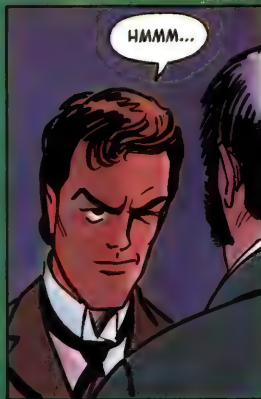
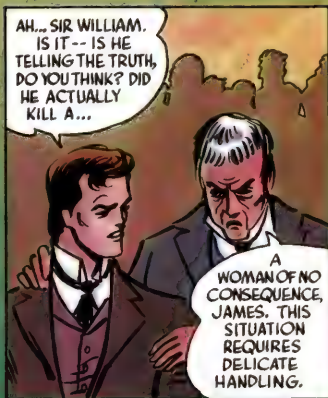
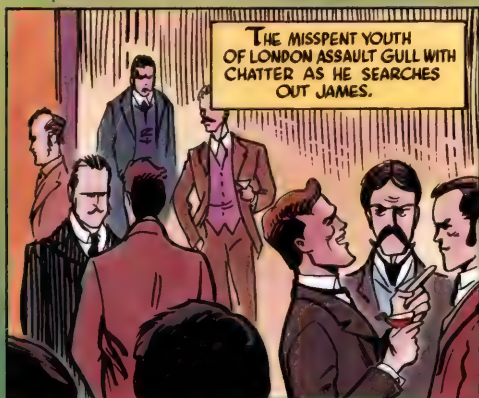


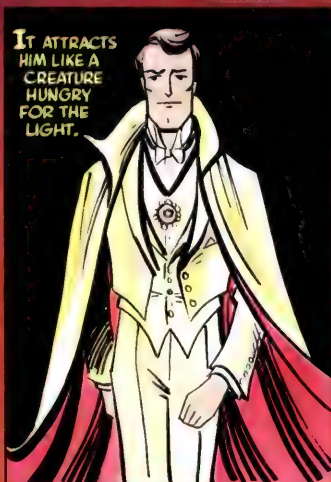
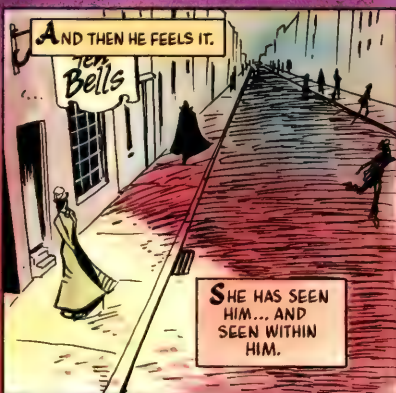
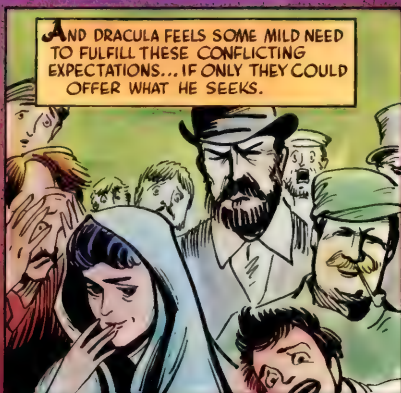
BUT...
I **KILLED**
A WOMAN!

YOU
KILLED A
STREET
WHORE.
THAT
BARELY
QUALIFIES!



RELAX NOW,
EDDY.







A TRUE GENTLEMAN IS A RARE SIGHT HERE, MY LORD.



HOW VERY REFRESHING TO DISCOVER SOMEONE WITH SUCH CLEAR VISION.

NOT ALL WOMEN ARE CAPABLE OF PIERCING THE VEIL OF MYSTERY WHICH CAN, AT TIMES, OBSCURE A MAN'S TRUE NATURE.



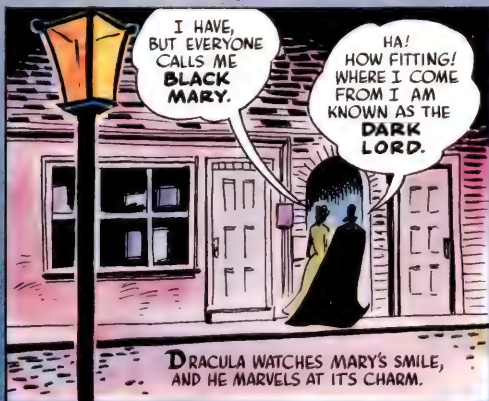
IF THERE'S A MYSTERY, IT'S WHY A DECENT AND UPRIGHT MAN OF MEANS IS PROMENADING DOWN COMMERCIAL STREET THIS TIME OF NIGHT.

OUT LOOKING FOR A BIT OF COMPANY, PERHAPS?



PERHAPS.

HAVE YOU A NAME?



I HAVE, BUT EVERYONE CALLS ME **BLACK MARY**.

HA! HOW FITTING! WHERE I COME FROM I AM KNOWN AS THE **DARK LORD**.

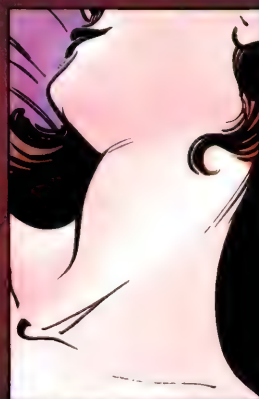
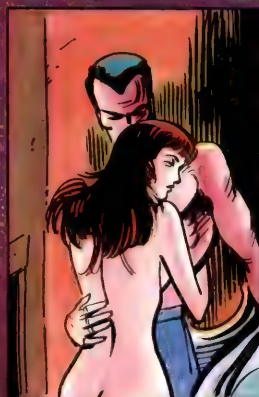
DRACULA WATCHES MARY'S SMILE, AND HE MARVELS AT ITS CHARM.



THE TOUCH OF HER HAND BRINGS WARMTH TO HIS COLD FLESH.



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AGES HE WONDERS IF HIS HUNGER IS FOR **BLOOD...**

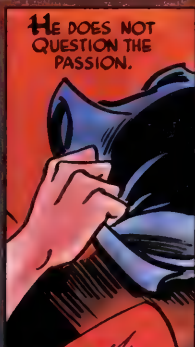




YOU ARE A WELL
OF YOUTH, GIRL.
I WONDER... WILL
I DRINK YOU
DRY?



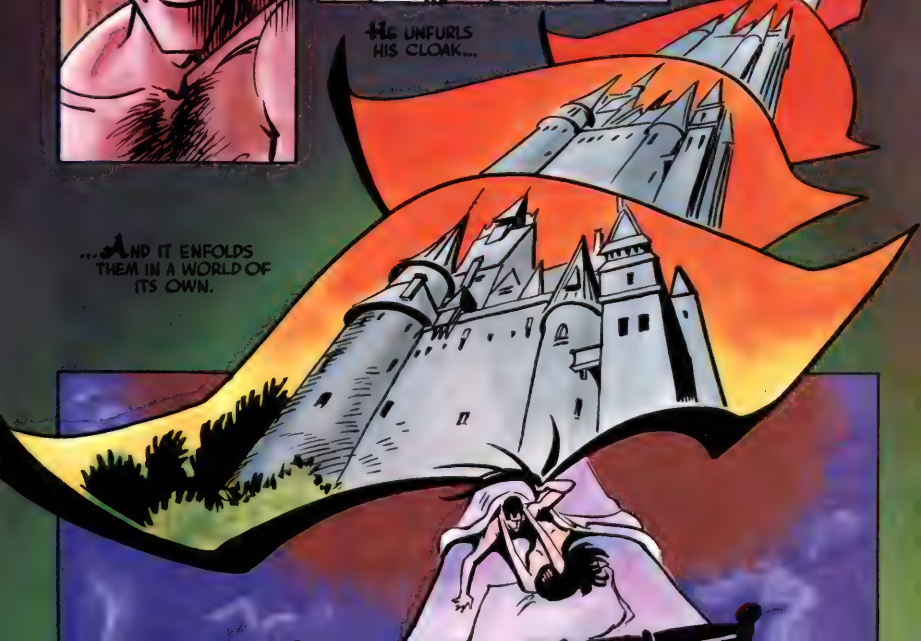
WHA--?!



HE DOES NOT
QUESTION THE
PASSION.

HE UNFURLS
HIS CLOAK...

...AND IT ENFOLDS
THEM IN A WORLD OF
ITS OWN.





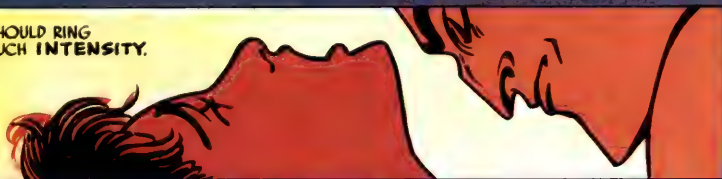


AS IF IN
A DREAM--
SHE FEELS
DESIRE.

BUT SHE
CANNOT
TELL IF IT
IS HER
DESIRE...
OR HIS.



LIFE SHOULD RING
WITH SUCH INTENSITY.



LOVE SHOULD BE
SO PURE.



AND SUCH MOMENTS SHOULD
LAST FOR EVER AFTER.

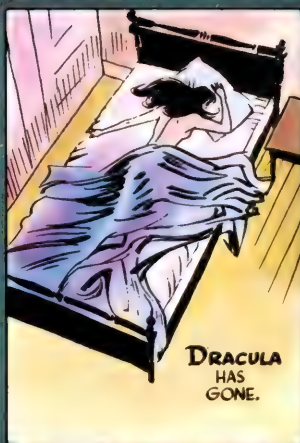




MORNING.



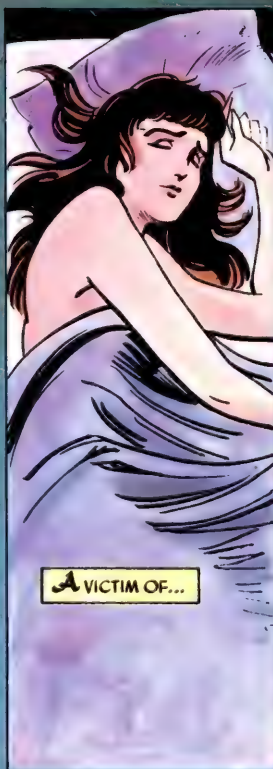
MILLER'S COURT
IS AS QUIET
AS DEATH.



DRACULA
HAS
GONE.



AND HE HAS
LEFT ANOTHER
VICTIM.



A VICTIM OF...



...LOVE.

WARP WORDS

Notes From the Publisher's Desk

Enter freely, and of your own will.

Blood of The Innocent represents the first (although, I fully expect, not the last) synergistic conjunction of several departures for WaRP Graphics. It is our first colorbook. It is our first mini-series. It is not only our, but **America's**, first weekly comic book. And, as icing to that cake, it is also a compellingly creepy good read.

As a well-known author points out in his words immediately following these, there is an irresistible something inherent not only in the concepts of Dracula and Jack the Ripper, but also inside us, the readers. We are powerless within the spell of the darkly repellant fascination we feel for these characters and their deeds. Messrs. Shanklin, Wheatley, and Hempel have, with their smoothly manic words and images, brought the elements of that fascination out into the light for us to see. But — surprise! — those elemental facets refuse to reflect light. Rather, they absorb it again, and us along with it.

WaRP is proud to be midwife to this new interpretation of — can we be certain it's only fiction? I hope your convoluted journey through these pages is a satisfying one.

From here however, I happily turn the podium over to a modern-day expert in such things.

Richard

Editor/Publisher

TWO VICTORIAN GENTLEMEN

Remember Gavril Princip?

I'll bet you don't.

Let me give you a few hints. He was a teenage student. He owned a cheap handgun. With it, he fired two shots, killed two people, and indirectly brought death to ten million others. Six million more were maimed or crippled for life. Hundreds of millions were left destitute and homeless. Because of him thrones toppled, dynasties fell, famine and disease and depression ruled. No single act of modern history ever did so much to change the world we live in today.

The youth who assassinated Archduke Ferdinand and his wife at Sarajevo in 1914 precipitated World War I. Aside from Adolf Hitler, he was the greatest mass-murderer of our times — but except for a comparatively few inhabitants of the Balkans, no one remembers his name.

In London, in 1888, five obscure, historically-unimportant prostitutes were the victims of an unidentified slayer.

Which brings up a question for you to think about. Why has Gavril Princip, whose crime led to one of the greatest bloodbaths in history, been forgotten — while everyone, all over the world, knows the nickname of the unknown murderer who called himself Jack the Ripper?

And while we're at it, here's another puzzler for you.

In a world which hardly recalls Henri Landru, Peter Kurten, Albert Fish, or hundreds of other real-life mass-murderers, torturers of women and children, and drinkers of human blood — why do we all remember a fictional character named Count Dracula?

I've been looking for answers to these

questions ever since my own life began to intertwine with Red Jack and the sanguinary Count.

Way back in 1943 I wrote a short story called "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper." It was just one of several hundred fantasies published in the pulp magazines of the day, ignored by critics and the general reading public.

But over a period of more than forty years since my little tale made its brief appearance on the newsstands, I have watched it take on a life of its own. My modest effort has been dramatized half a dozen times on radio, read over the air and in LP recording, presented on television, and reprinted in dozens of collections and anthologies here and abroad. Because of its continuing appeal, I have heeded requests to write other stories taking Jack into the future — even placing him in control of a computer for an episode of *Star Trek*. And in 1984 I put him into a full-length novel, **The Night of the Ripper**.

As a result of all this I've accumulated a small research library of what the British call "Ripperology." There are many accounts of what happened in London's East End in 1888 and many theories about Jack's identity. He was a medical student, an English doctor, a foreign surgeon, a midwife, a Russian secret agent, a barrister, a Jewish slaughterhouse worker, a shoemaker, a member of the Masonic Order, another murderer named Neill Cream, a sailor, the former tutor of the Duke of

Clarence, or the Duke himself, plus many others.

But when put to the test, all of the theories tend to come out smelling like Limburger cheese — and to further the resemblance, they all have holes.

Actual details don't match, even in such small matters as the first name of the man who went to Miller's Court to "knock up" Mary Jane (or was it "Marie Jeanette"?). Kelly for payment of back rent. The very amount of rent she owed differs from one account to another. More importantly the sworn testimony, expert opinions, and coroner's reports don't always coincide. And to top it all off, some of the items supposedly sealed away in the official files are missing. After almost a century of "authentic solutions" both the motivations for the murders and the suspects are still suspect.

In the case of Dracula, even worse problems exist.

Vampires have been known in folklore and legend throughout the world for thousands of years. Cases of real-life blood drinkers are documented by historians and medical researchers. During the nineteenth century superstitions about vampirism became a staple of Gothic fiction. In 1847 an English magazine published a "penny dreadful" entitled **Varney the Vampire, or The Feast of Blood**. Almost a thousand pages in length, it was serialized in a staggering two-hundred-and-twenty weekly installments.

Such sensational success was only temporary. Varney may have been a vampire but he was not immortal; public indifference killed him off as surely and swiftly as a stake through his heart. By 1897, fifty years later, the once-famous fictional figure was completely forgotten.

Then came **Dracula**.

You may not have heard of Gavril Princip,

but I'm quite sure you know about the Count. Bram Stoker, manager and private secretary of British actor Henry Irving, wrote his novel seven years after meeting and corresponding with Arminius Vamberg, a professor at the University of Budapest who fascinated him with tales of Transylvanian lore. Aided by research in the library of the British Museum, Stoker created **Dracula** — and **Dracula** created a sensation which endures to this day.

Like yourself, I encountered the Count in countless books, films, plays, and teleplays. He spoke to me from the screen in the Hungarian goulash of Bela Lugosi's accent, and I've had the pleasure of personal contact with his other famous **persona**, Christopher Lee. Over the years I began to believe I knew Count Dracula quite well — but I was mistaken.

Early in 1984 I was approached by a gentleman from The Book Sall, a firm specializing in rare first editions and literary treasures. He planned to publish a listing for collectors which would be priced at eighty-five dollars just for the catalog alone.

The most impressive item he intended to offer was a rarity which had been lost for many years — none other than Bram Stoker's original manuscript of **Dracula**!

The news excited me, and I was even more excited when the dealer invited me to write a short story about this manuscript, for inclusion in the catalog. Naturally I agreed, and soon through the mail came a number of Xeroxed pages of **Dracula** to aid my inspiration.

Only it wasn't **Dracula**.

Much to my surprise, Stoker's typewritten novel, annotated and corrected in his own handwriting, bore a totally different title — **The Undead**. It was at the last moment, just before publication, that he decided to call his novel **Dracula**.

Needless to say, when I wrote my short story, I titled it **The Undead**. And although I autographed one thousand copies of a page bearing the signatures of other contributors, I've never received a copy of the catalog.

Thus I don't know how my story fared when it appeared, nor who may have acquired Stoker's manuscript. Like so many other things connected with **Dracula**, much remains a mystery.

And, as in the case of Jack the Ripper, the biggest mystery is this — why has **Dracula** survived?

Vampires, of course, are supposedly immortal. But Varney wasted away in spite of his "Feast of Blood" and even J. Sheridan LeFanu's literary classic, **Carmilla**, is badly in need of a transfusion. Of all the legions of undead in film and fiction, only the Count, born in the same era as Jack the Ripper, lives on.

Both made their bloody bows during the final phase of the Victorian era. Can this be a clue?

The Victorian era. Even today the phrase suggests a prim and prudish period in which impropriety was frowned upon because "the Queen is not amused."

But others were.

If we go to history, to accounts of actual lifestyles in the England of the late nineteenth century, we're due for quite a surprise.

Queen Victoria may not have been amused

Victorian fears and passions ran rampant just below a veneer of societal morality.



in the crowded slums. Drug abuse and drunkenness were commonplace in all classes — but like other Victorian vices, they remained hidden beneath a veil of hypocritical silence.

That veil was torn to shreds by the knife of Jack the Ripper and the fangs of Dracula. Together they destroyed the fabric of supposedly-polite society.

But the real weapon they shared was sex.

For years, millions of proper Victorians had been closing their eyes to crime and immorality. Too inhibited to engage in real debauchery, they found meagre satisfaction in forbidden fantasies of sex and violence.

With the coming of Jack and the Count, those fantasies became open realities.

The Ripper, whoever and whatever he might have been, was no hypocrite. Together with many law-abiding citizens, he combined the craving for sexual indulgence with a conflicting hatred toward those who satisfied such needs. But unlike those who sinned only in imagination, Jack dramatized his desires — he took his pleasure, then punished its source. And to complete this vicarious wish-fulfillment he got off scot-free; his was a timid male's dream come true.

Dracula catered to the erotic dreams of frustrated females. Not just a vampire preying upon women, he was the embodiment of the incubus who gratified both himself and them in their sleep. He was also the romantic image of a foreign nobleman, a wealthy, charming lover whose hypnotic gaze seduced even the most chaste maiden — and at the same time provided an alibi for her surrender. If his love-bite brought death, it also brought the promise of eternal sexual freedom, presumably as one of the wives of this magically-magnetic supernatural symbol.

No wonder Victorians were enthralled by these two figures, the real-life Jack and the fictional Count! Long before the vogue of psychoanalysis, they openly revealed all that had remained hidden — the primitive impulses of cruelty and lust, the preoccupation with the mysteries of death and possible life beyond the grave.

The Victorian world has vanished, but the suppressed urges and the fascination with death and immortality remain.

Even in the more open and permissive society of today there is — thank the powers that be! — a silent majority which controls its actions. But its lurid longings still seek satisfaction — and find it in vicarious forms.

There's no need to look for a further explanation of the continuing appeal of **Dracula** and Jack the Ripper.

The answer to that secret lies within ourselves.



by sex, but she had nine children, and after the death of her husband there was gossip about an intimate relationship with John Brown, her burly Scotch gillie. Her eldest son, the Prince of Wales, was publicly proclaimed "the First Gentleman of Europe". Privately he was also its greatest womanizer, popping into the sack with the wives of his aristocratic friends and patronizing the best brothels of Paris. Another son, the Duke of Clarence, was supposedly homosexual.

English high society had more than its share of gays. Some of them kept a low profile; others, like Oscar, were quite Wilde. Many were into S&M — "birching" and "caning" — discipline, fetishism, and a peculiar taste for virgins — some of them only six or seven years old — sold to them by procurers and white-slavers, or even the girls' own parents.

Pornography flourished, and so did prostitution; tens of thousands of women, young and old, sold their favors in the streets of major cities. Many of them offered the bonus of a venereal disease without extra charge.

Incest and promiscuity went hand-in-hand

illustrations by W. Heath Robinson from Rabelais



NEXT WEEK



As fear builds in Victorian London, **Jack The Ripper** brutally murders two more victims! And **Dracula** finds himself falling in love with the young woman known as **Black Mary**.

Don't miss Chapter Two:
LIGHT OF THE SUN
DARK OF THE MOON